

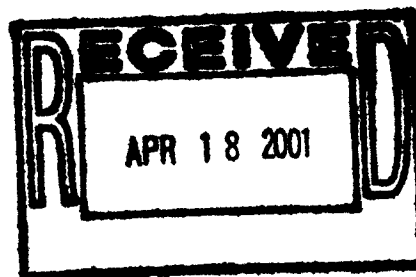
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# NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH NETWORK

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April 16, 2001

Dr. C.W. Jameson  
National Toxicology Program  
Report on Carcinogens  
MD EC-14  
P.O. Box 12233  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709



Dear Dr. Jameson:

I am writing on behalf of the National Women's Health Network to commend you and the National Toxicology Program for your decision to include steroidal estrogens in the Tenth Edition of the Report on Carcinogens.

The National Women's Health Network is the only membership-based women's organization that advocates on behalf of the health of all women. Founded in 1975, the Network's mission is to advocate for national policies that protect and promote all women's health and to provide evidence-based, independent information to empower women to make fully informed health decisions. The Network is committed to acting as an independent voice for women's health and thus accepts no money from companies that sell pharmaceuticals, medical devices, dietary supplements, alcohol, tobacco, or health insurance.

While the Network is well aware of the constructive uses of steroid estrogens in medicine and we do not oppose all such uses, we are also very concerned about the cancer risks posed by the drug. Since our founding we have worked to ensure that women will be provided with accurate and complete information about the risks posed by drugs prescribed for them. One of our first policy actions taken when the organization was founded was to advocate for the inclusion of information for patients about the health risks associated with drugs containing estrogen.

More than 25 years later, health risks associated with estrogen are still of significant concern to the organization. Premarin, a steroidal estrogen marketed for hormone replacement therapy at menopause, is the most prescribed drug in the United States. The drug is approved for use in treating hot flashes and osteoporosis, but it also has been found to be associated with an increased risk of breast, endometrial and ovarian cancer. The association of estrogen use with endometrial cancer has been known and acknowledged for many years. Women who use estrogen are twice as likely to develop endometrial cancer than women who have never used hormones. In January 1999, a long-term cohort study of participants in the Breast Cancer Detection Demonstration Project found an increased risk of breast cancer with estrogen-progestin therapy over that associated with estrogen therapy. And in March 2001, the

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**Founders** • Barbara Seaman • Phyllis Chesler, Ph.D. • Bellita Cowan • Alice Wolfson • Mary Howell, M.D.

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The only national public-interest membership organization devoted solely to women and health  
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American Cancer Society (ACS) reported the results of a study showing that the risk of ovarian cancer also doubled with long-term use of estrogen.

Based on our fundamental commitment to the principal that with accurate and complete information women can make good health decisions for themselves, we believe it is critically important that health care providers and other medical professionals acknowledge the risks associated with steroidal estrogens and share this information with their patients. Including this class of drugs in the Tenth Edition of the Report on Carcinogens is an important step in this direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed listing. If you have any questions regarding our comments, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at the offices of the National Women's Health Network:

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Thank you.

Sincerely,



Amy Allina  
Program & Policy Director